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SINO-SOVIET RIFT

1. We have now received reports from a number of sources which enable us to reconstruct a good deal of what has gone on between Moscow and Peiping since the Soviets called the Chinese to account at the Bucharest meeting in June.

2. For more than two years the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union and China had been publicly quarreling about fundamental issues in world Communist strategy. The most significant of these issues were:

a. Whether Khrushchev's policy of "peaceful co-existence" and detente should be replaced, especially in underdeveloped areas, by the more militant revolutionary policy advocated by China;

b. Whether the Sino-Soviet Bloc should seek to avoid local wars (Soviet view) or instead should support and even incite "liberation" and other "just" wars (Chinese view);

c. Whether disarmament should be seriously negotiated with the West (Moscow seems to say "yes," Peiping clearly says "no");

d. Whether it is admissible doctrine in some circumstances for Communist parties to contemplate the seizure of power in non-Communist countries without an armed struggle (the Soviets contend that Communist doctrine is sufficiently flexible to admit this possibility and that the technique is demonstrably feasible);

e. Whether Communist parties in non-Bloc countries should press a "minimum" or "maximum" program, and to what degree they should cooperate with non-Communists (the Soviets in most cases favor a "minimum" program with close cooperation whereas the Chinese favor a ruthless, uncompromising attitude).

3. At the WFTU meeting in June the Chinese party stressed its views so strongly as to exert a disruptive influence and, in effect, threaten Soviet leadership. The Soviet party reacted with an 84-page letter distributed to all Communist parties, which reaffirmed the Soviet positions in the above-listed disputes, rebuked the Chinese for "disloyal and uncomradely" behaviour, and closed with an implicit warning that Chinese failure to "draw necessary conclusions" would result in reduction or withdrawal of Soviet aid. Khrushchev followed this letter with a bitter speech emphasizing the same points.

4. We now have reason to believe that the Chinese party, about a week after the close of the Bucharest meeting (i.e., in early July), sent a harsh letter to the Soviet party. Judging by subsequent Chinese comment, it appears likely that the Chinese letter responded to the implicit Soviet threat at Bucharest by warning that, unless the Soviet party backed down, China would expel Soviet technicians and would publicly renounce all Soviet economic aid.

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5. This letter apparently made the Soviet party furious. The Soviet party shot back a letter reaffirming its positions and stating its refusal to be dictated to by its junior. The Soviet Home Service also began to prepare the Russian people for a possible break by ceasing comment on Chinese affairs.

6. The next development came at the plenum of the Soviet party central committee held in mid-July. Up to this time the Chinese had not been publicly named in the Soviet doctrinal blasts, but the plenum resolution explicitly charged that the Chinese were guilty of "leftwing sectarian deviation" and "narrow nationalism." These charges were similar to--but not as strong as--the Cominform resolution of June 1948 which expelled the Yugoslav party.

7. Shortly after the Soviet party plenum, a number of Soviet technicians in China began to leave. We do not know how extensive the withdrawal has been, but British officials in Peiping estimate that one half to two thirds of the technicians have left the country. We also do not know who took the initiative--that is, whether the Soviets carried out their threat to withdraw aid or whether the technicians were, in effect, expelled.

8. Concurrently with this withdrawal, and just after a secret meeting of Chinese party leaders in Shanghai, it is noteworthy that a Shanghai journal published an emotional article emphasizing the advisability of relying on "one's own efforts." This article observed that "reactionaries in some countries ... are trying to isolate us," and are refusing "to let us progress to become rich and powerful." It also said pointedly that "we have a belly-full of anger" and must use this anger for strength.

9. Similar emotional passages appeared in a mid-August article by a Chinese party politburo member. The article denounced imperialists and "those who echo them," declaring that their "anti-Chinese activity" simply proved that "we are the real Marxist-Leninists." It then went on to say that those trying to "isolate" us will just isolate themselves. The same article discussed a new policy of giving greater attention to the development of agriculture. Such a policy reflects a natural concern over food shortages, but may also suggest that the Chinese party desires to direct attention away from industry in anticipation of reduced Soviet aid.

10. During the Bucharest meeting the Soviet party arranged to have another bloc conclave in Moscow in November at which Communist parties were to try to resolve the Sino-Soviet dispute. In preparation for the November meeting the Soviets have in fact been taking actions calculated to isolate the Chinese party in the world Communist movement. During August, for example, several harsh attacks on Chinese policies and actions appeared in Soviet media. These charge the Chinese with "blasphemy," with drawing "absurd" conclusions from the current world situation, and with departing from and failing to understand Marxism. They also charge the Chinese implicitly with "disorganizing" and "disorienting" other Communist parties--evidently in preparation for a Soviet charge at some future bloc meeting that Chinese are "splitting" the world Communist movement.

11. Also in August, Moscow sent further letters to all Communist parties stating its case against Peiping. Through a high-level penetration we have learned the contents of the letter received by one of these parties. The letter contains a formal and sober appraisal of admitted "sharp and strong" differences with Peiping, and reaffirms the Soviet positions taken at Bucharest. It further says that Sino-Soviet differences should not be "publicly fanned," as this only helps the West, and that another attempt to resolve the differences will be made at the November meeting.

12. Between now and November it will probably become apparent to the Chinese that they are not going to get much support from other Communist parties; they will also be under heavy Soviet pressure to get back in line. These developments may induce Peiping to back down--to the extent of refraining from publicly shouting its disagreements with Moscow and from lobbying among other bloc parties. The Chinese may also agree at Moscow to sign another innocuous communique, as at Bucharest.

13. Any such "reconciliation" would be merely nominal, however. We see little prospect that the dispute can be resolved under the present leaderships of the Soviet and Chinese parties. The issues are too fundamental, and the leaders have too heavily committed their prestige against each other.

14. In any case, the next move is up to Peiping.

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